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UNITED STATES "VIGILANCE . . . [IN THE CARIBBEAN AREA] SHOULD NOT BE EQUATED WITH INTERVENTION, NOR ALARM WITH AGGRESSION": Statement Read to Correspondents by the U.S. Representative at the U.N. (Stevenson), October 8, 1962 (Excerpts)⁴⁴

The Government of the United States, like the governments of the other independent American Republics, will honor its commitments to the United Nations Charter and to the inter-American system. As

⁴⁴ U.S.-U.N. press release 4056 (text as printed in the Department of State *Bulletin*, Nov. 5, 1962, pp. 706-708).

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we have stated so often, the United States will not commit aggression against Cuba. But let it be equally clear that the United States will not tolerate aggression against any part of this hemisphere. The United States will exercise the right of individual and collective self-defense—a right expressly recognized in the charter—against aggression in this hemisphere.

The charges made by Cuba against the United States are dictated by two factors. One is that the Castro regime has associated itself with the Communist bloc in its pursuit of world domination. A tactic always used in seeking this objective is to ridicule, malign, and vilify anyone with the courage to oppose them.

The second factor is Cuba's self-inflicted exclusion from the American family of nations. The Castro regime has turned its back on its history, tradition, religion, and culture. Cuba has turned away from its neighbors, and it is at the mercy of the political riptides that sweep through the Communist world with such frequency.

Thus the other nations of the Americas are understandably anxious and alert. But vigilance cannot and should not be equated with intervention, nor alarm with aggression.

The hemisphere—and the world—were prepared to accept the original promises of the Castro government that economic and social justice would be brought to the Cuban people. But its original pledges have now been discarded by the Cuban regime, and we condemn with all the force at our command the violations of civil justice, the drumhead executions, and the suppression of political, intellectual, and religious freedom which have been inflicted on the Cuban people.

But even these excesses would not constitute a direct threat to the peace and independence of other states. However, Cuba has been opened to a flood of Soviet weapons and "technicians" and to the Soviet Union's so-called "fishing fleet,"⁸⁵ which is a long way from the fishing grounds off the north shore of Cuba. The cod and the herring gentlemen, are a long way from the new fishing fleet's headquarters. Cuba has not only armed itself to a degree never before seen in any Latin American country, but it has also welcomed penetration by the foremost exponent of a doctrine condemned in this hemisphere as "alien" and "incompatible." What we cannot accept—and will never accept—is that Cuba has become the springboard for aggressive and subversive efforts to destroy the inter-American system, to overthrow the governments of the Americas, and to obstruct the peaceful, democratic evolution of this hemisphere toward social justice and economic development.

The statements of the President of the United States on this subject⁸⁶ and the recent joint resolution of the Congress of the United States⁸⁷ amply attest to this concern.

⁸⁵ See *ante*, doc. III-41.

⁸⁶ *Ante*, docs. III-32 and 37.

⁸⁷ *Ante*, doc. III-44.

Nor can these developments be ignored by the American Republics as a whole. Let there be no doubt as to the solidarity of the nations of this hemisphere on the problem of Cuba.

In the face of this threat the foreign ministers have again unanimously reaffirmed their will to strengthen the security of the hemisphere against all aggression, from inside and outside the hemisphere, and against all developments and situations capable of threatening its peace and security.²⁸

The historic support of the members of the Organization of American States for the principles of self-determination and nonintervention is well known. These principles have been enshrined in acts of inter-American conferences, antedating by decades even the conception of the United Nations.

The United States has already begun to take effective measures concerning shipping and trade with Cuba²⁹ and the surveillance of traffic in arms and other strategic items in accordance with the discussions of the ministers of foreign affairs, the resolutions of the Eighth Meeting of Consultation,³⁰ and other inter-American instruments.

The purpose of these measures is the collective defense of the hemisphere. As I have said, these measures have no offensive purpose.

There was incessant talk this morning about economic strangulation and economic blockade. Neither of these terms has any application to this case. The current regime in Cuba has pronounced its intention to overthrow other governments in this hemisphere. Could anyone, therefore, take part in any trade, or aid trade designed to boost the Cuban economy and to arm its military services?

To say that our self-protective actions are aggressive or a warlike gesture is absurd. It is the most normal and, indeed, the least violent way in which we can express our strong disapproval of the threats and sword rattling emanating from Cuba.

No threat to peace in this hemisphere arises out of the unanimous determination of American Republics in this regard.

The President of Cuba professes that Cuba has always been willing to hold discussions with the United States to improve relations and to reduce tensions.³¹ But what he really wishes us to do is to place the seal of approval on the existence of a Communist regime in the Western Hemisphere. The maintenance of communism in the Americas is not negotiable. Furthermore the problem of Cuba is not a simple problem of United States-Cuban relations. It is a collective problem for all the states of this hemisphere.

If the Cuban regime is sincere in its request for negotiations and wishes to lay its grievances before the appropriate forum—the Organization of American States—I would suggest the Cuban government

²⁸ See *ante*, doc. III-46.

²⁹ See *ante*, doc. III-43.

³⁰ See *ante*, doc. III-12.

³¹ See *supra*.

might start by some action calculated to awaken the confidence of the inter-American system. The obvious place to begin would be the severing of its multiple ties to the Soviet bloc.

Let no one mistake the impact of this Soviet intervention in Cuba on the hope we all share for world peace. If the Soviet Union persists in the course it has chosen, if it continues to try to prevent the peaceful social revolution of the Americas, it will increasingly excite the deep indignation of the people of my country and of other American states. The result will be to make the resolution of issues far more difficult in every other part of the world. A consequence of this gratuitous Soviet initiative is to postpone even further the hope for world stabilization. I cannot state this point with sufficient gravity.

The tragedy of Cuba is still unfolding. How short has been the time since the two continents of the Western Hemisphere acclaimed the downfall of the Batista dictatorship and hailed what promised to be a democratic and progressive revolution. How quickly that promise was replaced by a reign of terror, confiscation, and the suppression of political, intellectual, and religious freedom.

Just as fear is the first price of oppression, it would also have been the final price, if the Cuban oppressor had not been saved from the Cuban people by the Soviet Union. How many times in history has fear of the people's wrath driven tyrants to sell their nation to more powerful tyrants?

Can the Cuban electorate send the Russian forces home? Do the Cuban leaders dare face their people without these alien protectors? A country bristling with Soviet missiles and "protectors" is your answer.

We will constantly work to reassure the Cuban people that they have not been forgotten or abandoned and make clear to freedom-loving Cubans, both within and without that country, that they can count on the sympathy and support of the American people in their efforts to escape the grip of Soviet domination and recapture their own revolution. We did this for those who sought the overthrow of Batista. We can do no less today.

The foreign ministers meeting at Washington voiced the fraternal affection of all American peoples for the people of Cuba and fervently wish to see them embraced again in the American family of nations. The United States joins wholeheartedly in this desire.

If the Cuban regime wishes to establish normal friendly relations in this hemisphere, let it return to the concepts and obligations of the inter-American system, let it cease its subservience to the Soviet Union, let it cease to be an avenue of intervention, which threatens the fundamental principles and the peace and security of all its neighbors with an alien doctrine.

The way is clear, and the choice is Cuba's.

EXTRACT FOLLOWS

(Cleared by Pres. for
Amb. Stevenson to say)

FILE

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that the US will not tolerate aggression against itself or against
any part of this hemisphere.